TOWN & COUNTRY CHURCH

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# The Rural Church and Evangelism

EDWIN L. BECKER

• Rural churches continue to stand as the bulwark of Protestant strength in America. Estimates are that two-thirds of the Protestant churches are rural and about forty per cent of Protestant membership.

However, rural America confronts Protestantism with one of its most baffling problems. With all of its strong traditions and its preponderant numerical strength, rural Protestantism often seems totally indifferent to its own future and to the tremendous opportunities surrounding it. In the past twenty-five years 25,000 Protestant rural churches may have closed, probably a net loss of 1,000 per year. Studies of the Committee on Cooperative Field Research over the past fifteen years indicate that about forty per cent of the rural churches are growing in membership, forty per cent are declining, and twenty per cent remain stationary.

### *Country Life*

Rural America remains the birthplace of our population. While for every ten city adults there are seven children, in the small town for every ten adults there are twelve children, and on the farm for every ten adults there are fourteen children.

Country life becomes increasingly prosperous and advanced when measured in terms of modern conveniences and American culture. But with this has come an ominous economic and social stratification among rural people: owners and tenants; large and small operators; part-time and full-time farmers; migrants.

The movement of people, the heavy commercialization of farming, and the growing specialization of occupations weaken the bonds that once held people together in rural communities. The pressures of our complex industrial society are felt in increasing measure in rural life.

As an additional challenge to the rural church has come the rapidly rising rural non-farm population. They are the people, both from city and from farm, who live in the country but work in the city. Rural residents, they are sometimes called, and they are increasing faster than either the city or farm populations. To the old-timers they are a disrupting influence. Their interests are as much urban as rural and usually not at all in farming.

Walter Firey, of the University of Texas, writes of this problem: "Farmers find themselves confronted by new neighbors who are more interested in discussing wage rates, layoffs, and collective bargaining than in such earthy topics as crop rotation, dairy herd improvement, or the merits of hybrid seed corn. And suburbanites find their new farmer friends are not always sympathetic to their desire for water and sewage facilities, bigger schools, and other such city conveniences—all of which cost money and add to the farmer's taxes. Yet more and more of these very same farmers are looking to the cities for seasonal wage employment, recreation, schooling, and worship. Likewise more and more suburbanites are turning to the soil in quest of a more wholesome and more secure way of life than they have known in the cities."

Rural churches are passing through days that are crucial and decisive for their future. Will they decide to remain, as many of them are, static and declining congregations, clinging to old ways, preserving present units? Or will they choose to proclaim the gospel to all people in every condition, taking the risks of reorganization, of untried program, of new methods?

### *Protestant Awakening*

The past five to ten years have seen a marked awakening of life in many rural churches. This has been accompanied by a renewed emphasis upon the rural church and the com-

### *In This Issue*

• Edwin L. Becker, who teaches Rural Church at the Yale Divinity School, New Haven, Conn., and was formerly director of town and country church work for the Disciples of Christ, considers on Page 1 the concerns of the evangelistic rural church.

For Herman C. Snyder's account of a community fair's "Hall of Religion"—see Page 3. Mr. Snyder is minister of an Evangelical and Reformed church at Quarryville, Pa.

For an account of a religious education program in Indiana, see Arthur Anderson's article on Page 3. Mr. Anderson is Director of the Department of Christian Education for the Indiana Council of Churches.

Theodore Roosevelt's message to Congress on American Rural Life (1909) is presented on Page 7.

Mrs. J. Carleton Otis, who has written "The Parable of the Ten Farmers"—Page 10—is a member of the Friends Church, Poplar Ridge, N. Y.

Elra R. Key tells about a religious education program in Minnesota on Page 10. Mr. Key, formerly minister of the First Presbyterian Church, Canby, Minn., is now coordinator of the Jo Daviess Cooperative Parish, Jo Daviess County, Ill., and serves the church at Hanover.

Farming as a Christian vocation is presented by Thomas Alfred Tripp (see Board of Editors) on Page 13.

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Congregational Church
Simonsville, Vt.

mitting of greater resources to it by many Protestant communions. There is today a general recognition of the evangelistic challenge of the rural population.

This renewed emphasis upon rural evangelism recognizes certain characteristics about the rural situation. What has been called evangelism in the past was too often only a rewarming of the hearts of the chronic backsliders and stirring up the emotions of the faithful. The unreached went past the church as indifferently as ever and too many felt, with justification, that they really were not wanted. Evangelism, therefore, has needed redefinition in the rural mind especially in terms of its objectives.

One sign of hope is the awakening of rural churches to the needs of the many totally un-evangelized people in their communities. This awakening is accompanied by a confession that very often class and economic status have been the blinders which kept the church from seeing its true evangelistic challenge. The new evangelistic emphasis comes, then, when churches are aware that their evangelistic responsibility reaches to the last person in the community.

### *Objectives*

Recently a survey of rural church leaders listed the following as the chief objectives of evangelism: (1) Finding the unchurched; (2) Winning people to Christ; (3) Growing in Christian knowledge; (4) Creating a continuing evangelistic outreach in the church; (5) Developing ability to win others. The sixth in importance was thought to be to "bring about a more effective social action in the community."

These objectives strongly suggest that evangelism is far more than restating the old truths to a congregation of the convinced. Evangelism means converting the convinced to their evangelistic responsibility, sending them out with warm hearts to witness to the Gospel before their indifferent neighbors. Many Protestant communions have in recent years developed plans for rural churches which consider these wider claims of evangelism.

### *Education and Stewardship*

The results of this evangelistic awakening are apparent in every community where the church has accepted its responsibility as a bearer of the Gospel. Men's and women's groups have been started and new church school classes organized. Missionary giving has increased and local budgets have risen. Churches have come from part-time ministerial leadership to full-time as the desire to become a growing and effective church has overcome lethargy and self-satisfied loyalty to tradition. Others have joined in larger parishes and pastoral unities that they might have better leadership with which to confront the demands of their changing communities.

The awakened rural church finds the outline for its evangelistic program in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians when he writes, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth." All of the implications for effective rural evangelism are to be found in that description of New Testament evangelism.

The good farmer knows that no matter how good the seed, planting requires painstaking preparation. Fields must be surveyed for contour lines. Soil analysis tells what fertilizers may be needed. The experiences of thousands of farmers and the tests of many scientists contribute to one farmer's judgment in planting the seed. Different soils require different preparation.

Likewise the evangelistic rural church knows that the good seed of the Gospel will take root only when the human soil of the parish is prepared for it. Rural evangelism today is based upon a sound knowledge of the parish, its geographical boundaries, the people who live within it, the needs and interests of each one. The best rural churchmanship has always practiced this.

### *Productive Land*

How is the seed of the Gospel to be planted? There is no one way. Preaching, evangelistic preaching, has strong traditions in rural areas. Greater attention is being given to taking the good seed in personal witness, one person to another, the Christian to the non-Christian. Lay-visitation evangelism is proving its effectiveness in the country as well as in the city. The newspaper, the radio, the billboard all are being used to reach and penetrate the minds of the indifferent and unreached. The rural church today uses the method or combination of methods which assure a constant year-round presentation of the Gospel to those in whom it has taken no root.

The harvest, as Paul knew and we know, is God's own work. It is his power which gives life and which provides for its growth and maturing. And that power works according to God's time-table, not our own. Thus, we cannot foretell the movements of the Spirit.

The rural church today will work with all the human and divine wisdom it may have at the task of planting the good seed of the Gospel of Christ to the farthest boundaries and in the most remote places of its parish. It will give thought and resources to an educational program which nourishes the growth of the Christian life. The rural church will further involve itself wholeheartedly to produce a quality of community life in which God's word can be heard and heeded. These it does in the confidence that God is also at work and in due season through the power of his spirit we shall reap, if we faint not.

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• There were 3¼ harvested acres of crop land for each person 30 years ago. Now it is only 2¼ acres.

—*Ohio Farm Bureau News*

## Hall of Religion

• When the Community Fair of Southern Lancaster County, Pa., was held in the fall of 1952, the churches of that section voted to sponsor a tent for "Hall of Religion." In order to finance the project each congregation was asked to contribute ten dollars; additional funds were raised through the sale of books and by individual contributions. The High School made its services available for publicity, and other groups and individuals helped with various details.

Above the entrance to the tent a banner with the words, "Hall of Religion," gave some indication of what the tent housed. Strains of familiar hymns and other sacred music came from a record player.

To the right of the entrance, as one entered, there was a triptych on migrant work and a display of free literature on the rural church. The front of the tent featured an altar on which were placed a cross and vases filled with flowers; above it hung a copy of Sallman's *Head of Christ*. Framed pictures of *Christ Knocking at the Door* and *The Good Shepherd* were placed at the corners of the tent, and there was a box on a small table near the altar for voluntary contributions. Then there were book tables and, finally, a large triptych displaying the slogan, "The Rural Church Serving the Rural Community." On it were charts picturing ways in which the church serves the community and the relationship of population and church membership in southern Lancaster County; on another section was a large map of the County with a picture of each church, its location, denomination, membership, and the name of its minister.

The Hall of Religion was visited by many people. Some came for rest and meditation; others simply to browse among the books and literature. Visitors were impressed with the important part the Church plays in the life of a community and agreed with the sponsors that the "Hall of Religion" should be a permanent feature of the Fair.

—Herman C. Snyder

# Morgan County Program

ARTHUR R. ANDERSON

• When the people of Martinsville, Indiana, decided to revive the program of weekday religious education that had once been conducted in their town, their sights were quickly raised to include the whole county in the project. So after a year of careful planning, organization and promotion, a county-wide program for fourth-grade pupils was started. This happened in September, 1952.

A program of this sort involves sound planning and much "leg work." Efforts were constantly made to keep the entire constituency informed as to the nature of the program, the probable cost, method of supporting it, qualifications of the teacher, curriculum material, etc., and representatives from each community were called into conference for the various steps.

*Cooperators*

The Rev. E. L. Thompson, pastor of the First Christian Church in Martinsville; the Rev. John Wolf, pastor of the First Methodist Church in the same town, and other ministers of the county gave freely of their time and leadership in establishing the program. Yet the program is essentially a lay project. The constitution requires that a layman be chairman of the executive committee and that nine of the twelve mem-

Westport, Conn. Photo by Philip Gendreau, N. Y.

bers of the committee be laymen. The other three members are ministers who are elected at large.

The first chairman of the committee was David Harker, a construction engineer, and much credit goes to him for the many hours of traveling and speaking he contributed to the project in the early days of the program.

The P.T.A. gave active support from the beginning. It registered students prior to the opening of school, and it is responsible for supervising the children as they go from the school building to a nearby church for class. During mild weather a bus is used for one class where the church is a considerable distance from the school.

Miss Delores Minniear travels over a thousand miles each month to teach the seventeen classes in the county. Fully trained, she has adapted herself to the needs of her students and conducts an excellent teaching program. Many of the youth groups and service clubs of the county have called on her for help in connection with their programs, and she can step into a pulpit to conduct a morning service when a supply minister is needed on short notice.

*The Record*

Although the program has been operating for only one year, the Morgan County Schools of Weekday Religious Education have a remarkable record of student participation, church cooperation and support. The figure for student participation is 558 fourth-grade pupils out of a total of 562.

The churches of the county support the program. The $5,000 budget is raised by contributions of $1.00 per member. Mr. Alvin G. Whitaker of Morgantown, the treasurer, reports that forty-two churches out of fifty-three in the county have already contributed financially and that, as budgets are prepared for the new year, this figure may rise to forty-five or forty-six. This is a remarkable figure when it is remembered that Morgan County is primarily agricultural with a total population of about 24,000, and that some of the churches are very small and without full-time ministerial leadership.

This program has required long hours of patient work on the part of many individuals. But there are now plans for providing instruction to fifth-grade pupils as well as those in the fourth.

What happened in Morgan County is an example of what good leadership, sound planning and genuine Christian concern can do in the area of weekday Religious Education.

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## The Church Library

• The Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches has recently published a manual for church librarians entitled, "Your Church Library." This twenty-four-page booklet contains many suggestions for planning a library, such as suggestions for budget, furnishings, classification of books, card catalog, circulation, etc. Pictures and current information about films, filmstrips and slides are also recommended.

Even where the facilities of a public library are available, a church library may contain "books on church history and church work, missions, Christian beliefs and other religious books" which are not readily available elsewhere.

The suggestions in "The Church Library" will prove helpful to churches and librarians planning to make this service available to their communities. It may be procured from the Division of Christian Education, 79 East Adams Street, Chicago 3, Illinois, for 25 cents.

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## What Is A Church?

• "A church is not measured in greatness by the beauty of its architecture, or the ability of its ministry, but by the people who live truly and serve faithfully that for which she stands."

—John Bunyan

## At a Country Church

• Ezra T. Benson, Secretary of Agriculture, was in a country church when he first received word that General Eisenhower wished to see him concerning his appointment. Mr. Benson was then one of the highest officials of the Latter Day Saints, after a career as a county farm agent and as executive of the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives.

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## From Correspondence

Dear Dr. Landis:

With gratitude I acknowledge receipt of your congratulatory message. Your expression of confidence and cooperation is most reassuring.

The magnitude of the responsibility and the complete confidence expressed by people from all parts of the nation make me humble indeed. I am confident that without God's help I cannot succeed. With his help I cannot fail.

Thank you so much for your sincere good wishes.

Faithfully yours,

Ezra Taft Benson

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## Ecumenical Institute

• *La Reformé*, the French Protestant paper published in Paris, reports that about fifty rural pastors from different European countries and some from America met last summer at Chateau Bossey, Celigny, Switzerland, under the auspices of the Ecumenical Institute.

They found to their great surprise that everywhere the rural world was facing the same evolution toward industrialization. "Everywhere the church which used to have a great place in social life feels itself drawn into this debacle. . . . The church should guard against the ever-present dangers of materialism. . . . The church should remain vigilant, attentive to the changes in the development of the people with whom it works in order that its message remain real."

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# Farewell and Hail!

BENSON Y. LANDIS

• About ten years ago we began planning Town and Country Church. Now, by a series of changes, I am to be leaving it as the main editorial craftsman and to be known as a "consultant." The language of counseling has always interested me. There is a counselor and a counselee, and which is which seems hard to decide sometimes. So I'm to be the consultant, and I suppose some of my good friends will be the consultees. (Tom Tripp as a consultee should certainly be interesting.) I got to be a consultant by a mysterious process I don't understand, but I would like on this occasion to address a few words to the readers of Town and Country Church.

### *Leadership*

It seemed altogether the best course for me to concentrate my activities and do research, and not to be spread out as I have been for over twenty years. It seemed also to be the best course for Don Pielstick to become the first full-time secretary of the Department of the Town and Country Church. I feel altogether sure that the only way this good could be reached is the one chosen. I am altogether happy about this. I am sure that Don Pielstick has now had the experience needed. A farm boy from Nebraska, a person with pastoral experience, one who has traveled widely throughout the rural U.S., a person with the qualities of mind and spirit requisite for cooperative tasks, he has already had a place of great usefulness in this somewhat indefinite but nevertheless real thing, the town and country church movement.

### *The Journal*

Country church journalism is not the easiest or simplest form of the profession. When we began Town and Country Church, my long memory could recall *Rural Manhood, Homelands, Rural America,* the *Journal of Rural Education,* most of them published for relatively brief periods. I had edited *Rural America,* 1923-1941, but had known about the others. I had been greatly influenced by *Rural Manhood* when I was in high school, maybe before! I knew all about the problems of these periodicals, and we were coming into a period, in 1943, when costs were high and going higher. We couldn't foretell how far they would go.

We have tried to uncover experience and activity and thought in this great field of the church in the rural community. Our main drive has been to deal with the concerns of religious people confronting the rural community, and I think ours is the only national journal that has this as its main purpose. We have often interpreted community developments that we thought churchmen ought to know about.

### *"Sign Up"*

We have had some remarkable cooperation in this journalistic venture, but we have also found many people who do things too busy to write for us or unwilling to do so. This has been a shoestring operation, with no opportunity to go out to the field especially, to write up news.

More people should write for this paper, telling about their experience. The important work in parishes is interesting, and there is no need to be dwelling on the unusual, as most of our newspapers do.

My final word is to record the variety of good things Mrs. Robinson has constantly done for this journal since she came in 1946. She has been able to re-write articles by people who can do things but find it hard to tell about them; to tear the heart out of articles published elsewhere and digest them for you; to write reviews of pamphlets and books; to do the patient work on proofs and pictures; and to combine this with the many other duties which a general office secretary must perform.

Journals have been likened to ships. This one must ply through furrows rather than seas. I'll be aboard part of the time still, and I hope the other sailors will stay and many others will sign up, but better still sign articles short and long.

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## The New Schweitzer Recordings

• In the village of Günsbach in Alsace, on the organ in the little church, Albert Schweitzer has played Bach's organ music, and recordings have been made on three long-playing Columbia records which reached the retail stores of the U.S.A. about Christmas time, 1952. In Günsbach is the home of Dr. Schweitzer, which is also the European headquarters of his great endeavor. The catalog entry of these records reads: 3—12" Col. S L—175 (4600/2). The price of the three in an album is $16.58, or $5.75 per single record. This is the first recording by Schweitzer in twenty years.

An early review by David Hebb appeared in the *Saturday Review of Literature*. The organ in the country church was built under Dr. Schweitzer's supervision. He prefers a small organ. Mr. Hebb says that the "sound is full and rich and the reed stops, so essential for tonal character, are particularly well voiced."

Dr. Schweitzer, who among many other things wrote a biography of J. S. Bach, insists that most organists play the music "altogether too fast." Thus Schweitzer plays relatively slowly. Mr. Hebb's further comment, in part, is as follows:

"Not all students will agree with Schweitzer's tempi or with his phrasing, but what he has done he has done with loving care and deep thought. He brings to the listener a clarity of line that makes the consonant voices easily followed and understood. Schweitzer is not a virtuoso performer displaying his skill, but rather an artist with a message to convey, a feeling about Bach to share with his listeners."

The album contains "such as the C Major Toccata, Adagio, and Fugue, the better-known choral preludes, including two versions of 'O Mensh Bewein' dein Sünde Gross," and a number of preludes and fugues. Included is Schweitzer's rendering of the Mendelssohn Organ Sonata No. 6, in D Minor.

The review in the New York *Herald Tribune,* Goddard Lieberson, vice-president of Columbia Recording Corporation, tells about an incident when Dr. Schweitzer last returned to Günsbach from Lambaréné, French Equatorial Africa. Dr. Schweitzer feared that the church building housing the organ had been permitted to dry out. He thought the pipes might be injured because of lack of moisture. "So we all set to work with buckets of water in the aisles, sloshing it on the floor until the proper moisture had been restored."

The church at Günsbach is one of about seventeen in Alsace, the use of which is shared by Lutherans and Roman Catholics.

—Benson Y. Landis

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## Church Groups Sponsor Far East Tour

• A new type of tour which gives the traveler an informed picture of the country and the people he is visiting has been announced by the Church World Tours, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

The first tour this year will be a 32-day trip to the Far East including the Philippines, Hong Kong, Macao, and Japan with stopovers in Honolulu for $1,990.

The Church World Tours are operated by the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (Congregational).

Using Pan American World Airways' first-class services, members of the tour will leave San Francisco on March 10th for Honolulu.

The Far East tour is one of a series of tours to be operated by Church World Tours during the year. Other tours will include Europe and the Middle East and Mexico and Guatemala.

## "On Common Ground"

• The Religious Film Association, 220 Fifth Avenue, New York 1, N. Y., presents "On Common Ground," a true story of the spiritual rebirth of a rural community.

"7 Mile Church" had been closed for years . . . victim of population shifts, the lure of the city, fast cars on open roads that never seemed to lead to church, and all the other problems which have destroyed so many churches.

"On Common Ground" presents the problem and shows how one community, through devotion and cooperation developed a larger parish plan which resulted in a strong federation of twenty-two active rural churches with a vital program of Christian service. It had become possible because the community had found the common ground of Christian faith.

"On Common Ground" was produced by Alan Shilin for a group of four major Protestant denominations. It was photographed on the scene by Dr. Frederick R. Thorne.

Use this film to stimulate discussion on the problems of the rural church and interdenominational cooperation and as a guide for leaders of rural church federations.

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## 100th Year at Antigonish

• The Centenary Year at St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, Nova Scotia, opened December 3, 1952 with religious ceremonies. On July 7th and 8th, 1953, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Antigonish Movement, or the work in adult education as carried out by the Extension Department, will be commemorated. On September 1st and 2nd, 1953, there will be formal academic ceremonies.

The University was established by the pioneers of Eastern Nova Scotia, and it followed soon after the clearing of the land, the building of homes and local churches. The work in adult education has often been observed by many visitors from the U.S.A., and other parts of the world.

# Theodore Roosevelt on American Rural Life

To the Senate and
House of Representatives:

I transmit herewith the report of the Commission on Country Life. At the outset I desire to point out that not a dollar of the public money has been paid to any commissioner for his work on the Commission.

The report shows the general condition of farming life in the open country, and points out its larger problems; it indicates ways in which the government, national and state, may show the people how to solve some of these problems; and it suggests a continuance of the work which the Commission began.

Judging by thirty public hearings, to which farmers and farmers' wives from forty states and territories came, and from 120,000 answers to printed questions sent out by the Department of Agriculture, the Commission finds that the general level of country life is high compared with any preceding time or with any other land. If it has in recent years slipped down in some places, it has risen in more places. Its progress has been general, if not uniform.

Yet farming does not yield either the profit or the satisfaction that it ought to yield and may be made to yield. There is discontent in the country, and in places discouragement. Farmers as a class do not magnify their calling, and the movement to the towns, though, I am happy to say, less than formerly, is still strong.

### *Strengthening Country Life*

Under our system, it is helpful to promote discussion of ways in which the people can help themselves. There are three main directions in which the farmers can help themselves; namely, better farming, better business, and better living on the farm. The National Department of Agriculture, which has rendered services equalled by no other similar department in any other time or place; the state departments of agriculture; the state colleges of agriculture and the mechanic arts, especially through their extension work; the state agricultural experiment stations; the Farmers' Union; the Grange; the agricultural press; and other similar agencies have all combined to place within the reach of the American farmer an amount and quality of agricultural information which, if applied, would enable him, over large areas, to double the production of the farm.

The object of the Commission on Country Life therefore is not to help the farmer raise better crops, but to call his attention to the opportunities for better business and better living on the farm. If country life is to become what it should be, and what I believe it ultimately will be —one of the most dignified, desirable, and sought-after ways of earning a living—the farmer must take advantage not only of the agricultural knowledge which is at his disposal, but of the methods which have raised and continue to raise the standards of living and of intelligence in other callings.

Those engaged in all other industrial and commercial callings have found it necessary, under moden economic conditions, to organize themselves for mutual advantage and for the protection of their own particular interests in relation to other interests. The farmers of every progressive European country have realized this essential fact and have found in the cooperative system exactly the form of business combination they need.

### *Guarding the Country*

Now whatever the State may do toward improving the practice of agriculture, it is not within the sphere of any government to reorganize the farmers' business or reconstruct the social life of farming communities. It is, however, quite within its power to use its influence and the machinery of publicity which it can control for calling public attention to the needs and the facts. For example, it is the obvious duty of the government to call the attention of farmers to the growing monopolization of water power. The farmers above all should have that power, on reasonable terms, for cheap transportation, for lighting their homes, and for innumerable uses in the daily tasks on the farm.

It would be idle to assert that life on the farm occupies as good a position to dignity, desirability, and business results as the farmers might easily give it if they chose. One of the chief difficulties is the failure of country life, as it exists at present, to satisfy the higher social and intellectual aspirations of country people. Whether the constant draining away of so much of the best elements in the rural population into the towns is due chiefly to this cause or to the superior business opportunities of city life may be open to question. But no one at all familiar with farm life throughout the United States can fail to recognize the necessity for building up the life of the farm upon its social as well as upon its productive side.

It is true that country life has improved greatly in attractiveness, health, and comfort, and that the farmer's earnings are higher than they were. But city life is advancing even more rapidly, because of the greater attention which is being given by the citizens of the towns to their own betterment. For just this reason the introduction of effective agricultural cooperation throughout the United States is of the first importance. Where farmers are organized cooperatively they not only avail themselves much more readily of business opportunities and improved methods, but it is found that the organizations which bring them together in the work of their lives are used also for social and intellectual advancement.

### *Effective Plan*

The cooperative plan is the best plan of organization wherever men have the right spirit to carry it out. Under this plan any business undertaking is managed by a committee; every man has one vote and only one vote; and everyone gets profits according to what he sells or buys or supplies. It develops individual re-

sponsibility and has a moral as well as a financial value over any other plan.

I desire only to take counsel with the farmers as fellow-citizens. It is not the problem of the farmers alone that I am discussing with them, but a problem which affects every city as well as every farm in the country. It is a problem which the working farmers will have to solve for themselves; but it is a problem which also affects in only less degree all the rest of us, and therefore if we can render any help toward its solution, it is not only our duty but our interest to do so.

The foregoing will, I hope, make it clear why I appointed a commission to consider problems of farm life which have hitherto had far too little attention, and the neglect of which has not only held back life in the country, but also lowered the efficiency of the whole nation. The welfare of the former is of vital consequence to the welfare of the whole community. The strengthening of country life, therefore, is the strengthening of the whole nation.

The Commission has tried to help the farmers to see clearly their own problem and to see it as a whole; to distinguish clearly between what the government can do and what the farmers must do for themselves; and it wishes to bring not only the farmers but the nation as a whole to realize that the growing of crops, though an essential part, is only a part of country life. Crop growing is the essential foundation; but it is no less essential that the farmer shall get an adequate return for what he grows; and it is no less essential—indeed it is literally vital—that he and his wife and children shall lead the right kind of life.

*Urgent Needs*

For this reason, it is of the first importance that the United States Department of Agriculture, through which as prime agent the ideas the Commission stands for must reach the people, should become without delay in fact a Department of Country Life, fitted to deal not only with crops, but also with all the larger aspects of life in the open country.

From all that has been done and learned three great general and immediate needs of country life stand out:

First, effective cooperation among farmers, to put them on a level with the organized interests with which they do business.

Second, a new kind of schools in the country, which shall teach the children as much outdoors as indoors and perhaps more, so that they will prepare for country life, and not, as at present, mainly for life in town.

Third, better means of communication, including good roads and a parcels post, which the country people are everywhere, and rightly, unanimous in demanding.

To these may well be added better sanitation; for easy preventable diseases hold several million country people in the slavery of continuous ill health.

The Commission points out, and I concur in the conclusion, that the most important help that the government, whether national or state, can give is to show the people how to go about these tasks of organization, education, and communication with the best and quickest results. This can be done by the collection and spread of information. One community can thus be informed of what other communities have done, and one country of what other countries have done. Such help by the people's government would lead to a comprehensive plan of organization, education, and communication, and make the farming country better to live in, for intellectual and social reasons as well as for purely agricultural reasons.

The government through the Department of Agriculture does not cultivate any man's farm for him. But it does put at his service useful knowledge that he would not otherwise get. In the same way the national and state governments might put into the people's hands the new and right knowledge of school work. The task of maintaining and developing the schools would remain, as now, with the people themselves.

*Commission's Report*

The only recommendation I submit is that an appropriation of $25,000 be provided, to enable the Commission to digest the material it has collected, and to collect and to digest much more that is within its reach, and thus complete its work. This would enable the Commission to gather in the harvest of suggestion which is resulting from the discussion it has stirred up. The Commissioners have served without compensation, and I do not recommend any appropriation for their services, but only for the expenses that will be required to finish the task that they have begun.

Photo by Philip Gendreau, N. Y.

To improve our system of agriculture seems to me the most urgent of the tasks which lie before us. But it cannot, in my judgment, be effected by measures which touch only the material and technical side of the subject; the whole business and life of the farmer must also be taken into account. Such considerations led me to appoint the Commission on Country Life. One object should be to help develop in the country community the great ideals of community life as well as of personal character.

One of the most important adjuncts to this end must be the country church, and I invite your attention to what the Commission says of the country church and of the need of an extension of such work as that of the Young Men's Christian Association in country communities. Let me lay special emphasis upon what the Commission says at the very end of its report on personal ideals and local leadership. Everything resolves

itself in the end into the question of personality. Neither society nor government can do much for country life unless there is voluntary response in the personal ideals of the men and women who live in the country. In the development of character, the home should be more important than the school, or than society at large.

*Of Primary Importance*

When once the basic material needs have been met, high ideals may be quite independent of income; but they cannot be realized without sufficient income to provide adequate foundation; and where the community at large is not financially prosperous it is impossible to develop a high average personal and community ideal.

In short, the fundamental facts of human nature apply to men and women who live in the country just as they apply to men and women who live in the towns. Given a sufficient foundation of material well being, the influence of the farmers and farmers' wives on their children becomes the factor of first importance in determining the attitude of the next generation toward farm life.

The farmer should realize that the person who most needs consideration on the farm is his wife. I do not in the least mean that she should purchase ease at the expense of duty. Neither man nor woman is really happy or really useful save on conditions of doing his or her duty. If the woman shirks her duty as housewife, as home keeper, as the mother whose prime function it is to bear and rear a sufficient number of healthy children, then she is not entitled to our regard. But if she does her duty she is more entitled to our regard even than the man who does his duty; and the man should show special consideration for her needs.

*Strength of the Nation*

I warn my countrymen that the great recent progress made in city life is not a full measure of our civilization; for our civilization rests at bottom on the wholesomeness, the attractiveness, and the completeness, as well as on the prosperity, of life in the country. The men and women on the farms stand for what is fundamentally best and most needed in our American life. Upon the development of country life rests ultimately our ability, by methods of farming requiring the highest intelligence, to continue to feed and clothe the hungry nations, to supply the city with fresh blood, clean bodies, and clear brains that can endure the terrific strain of modern life; we need the development of men in the open country who will be in the future, as in the past, the stay and strength of the nation in time of war, and its guiding and controlling spirit in time of peace.

—From a Message to Congress, 1909

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## The Parable of the Ten Farmers

MRS. J. CARLETON OTIS

• When Jesus healed the ten lepers, only one returned to give thanks. "And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? Where are the other nine?" A modern version of this story might be somewhat like the following:

Ten farmers ploughed and planted their fertile acres with corn, beans, buckwheat and oats. They fertilized and sprayed, dusted and cultivated their crops after the most approved and modern manner.

There ensued a long period of dry weather in June and early July when no rain fell. In August as they met in the market place or on the highway they murmured one to another, "My beans have not podded. I never saw the like in all my years of farming. There are blossoms at this late date and yet no pods."

September came. There were small pods, long pods, purple blossoms, and yet no ripe beans. Some said, "I shall plow mine under and sow wheat." Some spent sleepless nights lamenting the investment of seed, fertilizer, time and machinery when there seemed no return.

But lo when the month of October was come, the threshers went into the fields and great was the harvest thereof. The dust from bean combines could be seen at every hand. The elevators and store houses were full. The bags and the bins in the barns were bulging with beans. Trucks were on the highway at all hours, drawing beans to market.

Of the ten farmers, some resolved to plant beans again in the same fields and to rent or buy more land to raise more beans another year. Another said, "It is enough! I shall turn to corn hereafter. I see corn houses filled with corn in every farm yard." Another resolved to enjoy his profits by buying a new car and traveling to a far country.

One alone reasoned thus: "The crop which I thought was lost has been restored to me. I planted and cultivated, fertilized and sprayed, but God gave the increase. I shall give him the credit and the thanks. The land which I hold is mine in trust. I am a steward, God's husbandman. I shall guard its fertility, prevent its erosion, depletion, exhaustion and destruction. The profit from this land is also a trust to be used not entirely for my own comfort but to be shared. Even my health and strength and freedom from disease is God's gift."

Moreover, he felt impelled to ask God's forgiveness for his worry and frustration, despair and fear. He remembered God's promise of a seed time and harvest. Again he felt the assurance of the "everlasting arms" supporting him, and he was truly grateful.

"Were not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there none found that returned to give glory to God save this stranger?"

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## Auction of Services

• The First Presbyterian Church of Fisk, Missouri, recently conducted an auction of services to raise money for necessary repairs. An elder of the church shoveled coal; others scrubbed, painted, hung paper, sewed, cooked, cut hair, etc. The proceeds of the day's auction amounted to nearly $800, and everyone enjoyed the fun and fellowship.

# What a Rural Church Did in Christian Education

ELRA R. KEY

• Christian education is the life blood of any church—large or small, urban or rural. Wherever there are people, there are children, youth and adults to be led into a growing faith in Christ and the creative life which comes through that faith.

The First Presbyterian Church, Canby, Minnesota is a typical congregation in a rural community of 2300 persons. The business men of the town and the surrounding farmers are mutually dependent upon each other. Church membership is almost equally balanced, one hundred families obtaining their livelihood from the soil and almost as many in town.

### *The Program*

Whenever we think of leading a church into a growing faith in Christ, there is the whole program of the church to be considered—the worship services, Sunday church school, the released time school, the vacation school, youth fellowships, men's fellowship, women's association and the parent-teacher group. It is imperative that each of these groups have a Christ-centered program including certain basic elements—worship, Bible study, all phases of stewardship, outreach, social education and action.

The pastor believed that if all organizations in the church cooperated to plan comprehensive, unified programs, greater interest and growth would result. Representatives from every group in the church were called together to form a Christian Education Council which included a member of the session, a trustee, church school superintendents, and program chairmen of the men's fellowship, the women's association, Westminster Fellowship and Couple's Club.

### *"Measuring Rod"*

The basic elements of a Christian education program were reviewed and discussed in the first training session of the council. This gave each organization a "measuring rod" as it planned and analyzed its yearly program. Then the council studied the entire church program, its strength, its weaknesses, the personnel, physical equipment, etc.

The church had adopted the "Christian Faith and Life" curriculum as soon as it was published. Through the unified budget the church purchased the parent-teacher magazines, the reading books, activity materials, teaching pictures, and workbooks. The school of 130 pupils was departmentalized according to the suggested age groupings.

### *Space at Premium*

A rug on the floor, low shelves and carefully chosen toys transformed the kitchen for the three-year-olds who respond best to the "play method" of teaching. This room was also used for a nursery during the morning church service with young mothers taking turns in the supervision.

Screens were used to separate the kindergarten and each of the three primary classes which shared the social hall and adjoining corner. Superintendents of the departments cooperated in planning so that the music of the worship periods, planned to suit each age group, would not conflict.

As in many churches today, space for classes was at a premium. Lap boards assisted junior and intermediates in completing their workbook assignments as they met in pews of the sanctuary separated by screens from the seniors and adults.

### *Discussions*

When the first parent-teachers quarterly preview meeting was scheduled, the support which the religious education committee could give was evident. Its members had already been convinced of the necessity for greater home participation in Christian education, and were present, forming a faithful nucleus of both fathers and mothers which grew into a healthy organization of forty to fifty members. The coming quarter's lessons in the church school were previewed with the teachers. Many mutual religious problems and techniques were discussed by teachers, parents, the pastor and occasionally the synod Christian education field director.

Adult supervision was provided in another room of the church for the children during these meetings and all met for a social time at the close.

Providing chairs of the proper height for the three primary classes, large colored pictures hung at the proper height for children, worship centers, a filing box for teaching pictures and folding partitions were some of the projects undertaken by this parent group which added greatly to the physical equipment of the school.

### *Recruiting Leaders*

One of the most rewarding projects with which the council assisted was the enlistment of teachers. "Let's make a list of prospective teachers and send them a brief but carefully worded letter. We'll just state our needs and our faith in these people." The entire council supplied names for the list—some were persons the superintendents and pastor had overlooked. A committee of the council composed of a session member, a representative of the men's fellowship, and the superintendent of the church school drew up a letter.

Some of the letters were returned promptly with affirmative answers. Some had to be called for. The results were most gratifying. For the first time, there were as many regular teachers as were needed for the Sunday church school, the week day and the vacation school, as well as assistants and substitutes.

### *Training Leaders*

Training was provided in the monthly teachers' meetings where the texts recommended by the Board of Christian Education were studied,

reviewed and discussed with the pastor serving as leader. The staff enjoyed a period of unifying fellowship at the close of these meetings. Area training meetings planned by the presbytery were available in nearby towns and the expense of attending a laboratory school was provided by the church for the teachers who could attend each year.

*Classes for Children*

When the amount of time of the Sunday church school was compared to the number of hours in a week, parents were convinced that the week-day sessions made possible by the releasing of children from public school on Friday should be continued. Children from third grade through high school attended these sessions of one hour, with three parents and pastor serving on the teaching staff. Materials which supplemented those of the Sunday church school were used.

Vacation church school offers another block of time for the important task of Christian education. During the busy season for farmers the transportation of children from a radius of fifteen miles in all directions for two weeks is something of a problem. The circles of the women's association agreed to serve a hot lunch at noon so that a one-week, full-day session could be held instead of half days for two weeks.

The coming together of the children and youth of the church to participate as a group in expressing thanks for food, eating lunch, and singing fun songs was an experience in Christian fellowship cherished by all. A rest period was carefully observed after the lunch period. The teaching staff met each afternoon at the close of the school for an evaluation session and fellowship time with light refreshments. Parents cooperated, some bringing children to school in the morning, others coming for them in the afternoon.

*Adult Groups*

All women of the church were encouraged to become active members of the church's unified organization —the women's association. A balanced program including all phases of Christian education was planned for the year with the women meeting twice a month. The organization performed innumerable local service projects as well as supporting the broad program of women's work of the denomination.

The men's fellowship met quarterly at a dinner meeting with a special speaker. A successful service project was the painting of the entire church and manse with nearly fifty men participating.

*Other Services*

Equipped with an appreciation for church music of a high quality the choir director led the choir into the singing of the best hymns of the church. The pastor realized that children must be trained in good music today if they are to be appreciative and participating adults tomorrow. A group of parents became responsible for the "junior fellowship" group. Supervised play, a brief study time, supper and choir practice were arranged for this group immediately after school.

A short time Christian education project in race relations was carried through one summer when a group of ten Negro children from the city were placed in homes of the members of the church for a week of vacation.

In order to present the total program of the church to the entire congregation the pastor started taking colored slide pictures of church activities. "I had no idea so much goes on in our church" was the comment of many.

The pastor felt that there was a spirit of unity and a consciousness of a central purpose throughout the entire church which had come as a result of the study and work of the representative Christian Education Council. This Council was instrumental in many subtle but effective ways in changing the course of the life of the church and in getting the church to adopt new and more efficient methods of leading people to Christ.

—Reprinted from *The International Journal of Religious Education,* with permission.

## A Prayer for Truck Drivers

• O, Thou who art concerned with the daily occupations of men, remember this day the truck drivers of our land.

Guard them as they fling their ponderous loads over hills and through valleys. Direct them in the skills of their trade lest their vehicles of benevolence become murderous leviathans of the highway.

Grant them the thoughtfulness of those who obey the rules of the road, who warn when there is danger and who are good Samaritans to travelers in need.

May each driver feel a deep sense of duty well done. May he have the satisfaction of helping to feed the hungry and give clothing and shelter to the needy.

Build up among truck drivers a true fraternity of brotherhood and clean, wholesome living. Create between them and the owners of fleets an effective understanding that shall establish a community of interest and discover amicable solutions of problems.

Give to each the deep and abiding satisfactions by which man grows in spirit and in truth. In Jesus' name we pray, *Amen.*

—Mark Rich

## Purposes of This Journal

The purposes of this Journal are:

A. To encourage cooperation among rural churches.

B. To improve the administration of the local church, this to include organization of the church, finance, religious education, community relationships, and the training of lay leadership.

C. To stimulate the development of a Christian philosophy of rural life, this to embrace ethical issues in agriculture, social reconstruction, and government programs; and the content of the minister's message.

## Part of Larger Program

The Journal is an important part of an enlarged "cooperative rural church program" that will encourage a national "rural church movement."

# A Half Century of Co-op Growth

A. W. McKAY

• The co-op in the beginning years of this present century were far, far different from that of today. The pace then was set to the slow trot of incoming horses and wagons carrying the farmers' produce, to the narrow circle of the few miles surrounding the small town trading center, and to the leisurely means of getting information about markets around by word of mouth in the days when rural telephones, radios, and even Rural Free Delivery were still something for the future.

The co-op then was a place to sell the farmers' cream, an elevator to market his grain, or a small stockyard to ship his live stock to market —usually doing only one of these jobs, seldom more.

*More Services*

Today's co-op is doing increasingly more jobs for its farmer members. It may sell his milk, churn his cream into butter and sell it back to him as well as to other customers, and even make some of the surplus milk into cheese or other manufactured products. As a matter of fact, a farmer can get most anything he needs to run his farm at some co-ops —feed manufactured in the co-op's own feed mill, fertilizer it manufactures itself, tested seeds to plant his land, and co-op or commercially manufactured equipment to run his farm, while at the same time this same association may also be marketing his and his neighbors' products.

The early-century co-op and the present-day one have this in common, however. They were and are the magnet that draws farmers together as business partners to buy and sell to better advantage. All through this period cooperatives have mirrored the changing economic and social life of the country —through wars and rumors of wars, through panics and prosperity, and through all the rapid changes and developments of recent origin in agriculture.

During this time, efficiency has improved until the term "farmers' organization" is no longer one of reproach. Instead more than half the farmers in the country are now proud to stand up and be counted as members of the more than 10,000 marketing and purchasing cooperatives . . . organizations that in the harvest year 1948-49 handled a rousing $9 billion total business.

The entire period from 1900 to a year or two after 1920 was one of rapid—though not always wise—growth. Many cooperatives weren't adequately financed and were formed without any preliminary survey of conditions and the need for them. It is not surprising then that, like a growing boy, cooperatives tripped over their own feet fairly frequently.

*Changes in 20 Years*

Cooperatives have increased in size, in number of members and volume of business, and in the complexity of services they perform for members. With the increase in size has come about a decrease in number . . . mainly because large local, district or regional cooperatives now do the job earlier performed by several smaller associations.

Hundreds of livestock shipping associations and farmers' elevators disappeared as roads improved and automobiles and trucks became more common. Hundreds of community creameries and cheese factories were consolidated to form cooperatives with more modern facilities serving larger areas.

Since 1925-26 the average membership of all marketing and purchasing cooperatives has increased from 250 to about 634. In the same period the average volume of business per association has grown from approximately $220,000 to $950,000. Of course, a considerable part of this increased business can be traced to the change in the general level of prices.

In 1900, incorporation was as a rule under the general corporations law of the State. All States now have special laws providing for incorporation of cooperatives.

The list of Federal statutes in which cooperatives are mentioned is long. The first to deal largely with cooperatives was the Farm Loan Act of 1916. By authorizing the organization of Federal Land Banks and national farm loan associations it started the cooperative credit system we know today.

The Cooperative Marketing Act of 1926 created what is now the Cooperative Research and Service Division of the Farm Credit Administration. Its job is to spread and acquire information about cooperation and to actively help cooperatives find answers to their problems. This work has proved significant in the trend toward scientific study as a basis for progress.

*Progress*

The part played by the farm organizations, State extension services, and State departments of agriculture in promoting and assisting cooperatives would make a story in itself. The Grange, the parent of the cooperative movement, still actively encourages farmers' cooperatives.

Thus a long look back shows many changes since we shifted into the Twentieth Century. In 1900 the typical cooperative was a local serving the needs of a few members. Today the area served has increased beyond these confined community limits. These off-the-farm businesses of farmers have accelerated whenever necessary to keep up with the quickening speed of the times. They have improved their buildings and equipment. And what is more important, they have developed directors and managers who have the cooperative know-how.

The typical co-op today is a well-run, efficient business organization whose capital, as a rule, is contributed by members in proportion to the volume of business they transact. Cooperatives, in brief, have passed out of the horse and buggy days—and have arrived at the age of the jet plane.

—From *News for Farmer Cooperatives*

## The Farmer's Vocation

THOMAS ALFRED TRIPP

• The farmer walks upon the clean bottom of the furrow which he makes in the firm earth and feels a close relationship to the sweating animals that pull the plow. The tremor of the crumbling soil, as it slides off the glistening mouldboard, gives him a sense of victory over nature. To plow a field is to change the face of the earth; to turn it with a clean furrow is to achieve the satisfactions of an artist; but the plowman fails to perceive the real nature of his vocation unless he recalls that it is God that maketh the harvest.

The farmer depends upon the microcosm of the clod which holds the precious fertility for man's food and he waits upon the macrocosm of the Universe which determines the round of seasons. He looks up into the face of the frowning cloud which threatens to turn his fields into swamps in the rainy season and gazes wistfully at the cloudless sky in time of drought. Extremes of nature, forces beyond his control, leave him in the hands of God. He bows in gratitude before the forces which bring rain or sun at the right times. He is frustrated, sometimes defiant, when drought or flood, heat or frost defy his calculations.

Finally, the farmer may be forced to drop his hands and tools in resignation, admitting defeat before drought, flood, blizzard or infestation. Then, with the coming of a new season, hope arises within him and he tries again, ever trusting that "this year will be better." The farm family, more than any other, is in touch with the rhythm of the Universe. The farmer may not be more devout than other men but he has more opportunity than most to feel and know the manifestations of God in the world.

What the machine does to the farmer's vocation is yet to be seen. The farmer on the mechanized farm is no longer the man in the furrow who thrills to the tremor of the crumbling earth. Instead, his body surges to the rhythm of the vibrating machine. He is more remote from the soil than the man in the furrow and often closer to the spirit of the city. Unless he recognizes his as a Christian vocation, land, to him, is a resource to be exploited for material gain. He is a capitalist in the field, self-seeking and gloating. More and more acres are demanded by his huge enterprise requiring a sense of stewardship to prevent disaster. If, once he has sapped the life out of a field, he casts it aside as he would a worn-out machine, he invites the judgment of God upon his wasteful enterprise.

The farmer on the machine has every chance to develop his work as a Christian vocation. Because of his power of machine and property, his responsibility is great; his need of repentance terrible. Machines take the burden off the backs of the farmer and his family, leaving energy and time for spiritual pursuits. If they care to do so, they have time for church, reading, travel and enjoyment of fellowship with neighbors. The capitalist-farmer caught between two economies, rural and urban, belongs to neither unless he pays a price. He must struggle for a sense of vocation and deliverance from conflicts due to the dual and transitional nature of his relationships.

For the man in the furrow, the machine-farmer and the vast majority of "average" farmers in between who have some of the qualities of both, work is a matter of great moment. Labor is dignified when it builds with honor a quality of product and fulfills man's obligations in life. Farming is a Christian vocation when husbandmen put their hands to work and their hearts to God.

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## Rural Church Study

• Within an area of six by fifteen miles in the southeast section of Macon County, Alabama, a study of sixteen churches has been made by the Religious Extension Service of Tuskegee Institute. A few of the findings are as follows:

The pastors live from nine to one hundred miles away from the area. Only one public school teacher out of thirty lives in the vicinity.

The academic training of most of the pastors stopped in the elementary and high school. Three of the sixteen churches hold worship services two Sundays a month. Thirteen hold regular worship services once a month. There are fourteen Sunday schools and nine missionary societies in the sixteen churches. Preaching services once a month is the usual offering.

The study is being discussed by the pastors and the church and community leaders, with the hope that one or two full-time resident pastors may be secured.

—V. A. EDWARDS

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## From Correspondence

Dear Friends:

At the present time I am on the teaching staff of the school at the Highland Institution. It is located in the mountains at Guerrant, Kentucky, five miles from the paved highway. The roads here are built along the creeks between the mountains. It is not strange to have many turns on the highway around such mountainous sections. It is seven miles to the county-seat, riding by mule over the mountains. By car, the distance is fifteen miles.

Edward O. Guerrant, M.D., D.D. (1838-1916) founded the school and mission work around this area. The history can be traced back as far as 1885 when it was a part of the work of the Soul Winners Society. Highland College was first put into operation in 1907. Later a hospital was erected. So, the present name of Highland Institution covers both school and hospital.

The general warmth of the South does not reach us easily as we are surrounded by mountains. The winter cold comes fairly early in the fall, and the houses are not well heated. This winter I had to learn to start a coal stove, and how to keep it going at the right temperature. That was something new for me. So there is no limit to the discovering of new ways of life and learning to adjust and adapt oneself to them.

Your "highlander,"

JEN-CHI CHANG

# The Angelus and Valley Farm

HORACE G. SMITH

• To the uninitiated, it will seem strange to mention the *Angelus* and Valley Farm in one and same title as though they belong together. The one is a very famous painting, a creation of the great artist, Millet, known at sight by multitudes and loved by all who have sensed its winsome secret. The other is one hundred and sixty acres of fertile land quite like thousands of other Illinois farms. This farm is known to very few but there are those who love it.

### *The Likeness*

To get the connection between Valley Farm and the *Angelus* you must look again at the painting. In the foreground you will note two workers—a peasant and his wife. They have been at work in the field all day long. Now they are resting on their hoes or other tools with their heads bowed. As the poet puts it:

"They cease their day long sacrament of toil,
That living prayer, the tilling of the soil."

Back of this couple you see a cluster of trees where the village is located. If you look closely you will observe above the trees the spire of a little church. Then you realize that from the bell on that tower the angelus is sounding and the toilers in the field are pausing for prayer in response to its summons.

The husband and wife who made Valley Farm a home from 1881 to 1916 lived like the peasants in the *Angelus,* under the spell of the church. They sought to run the household and manage the farm in keeping with its teachings. One might say that they were controlled by the church, though that control was never formal or dogmatic. The church inspired them but it never compelled them.

When the wind was in the right direction, the village church bell could be heard at Valley Farm over three miles away. In a sense they heard and answered its call morning, noon and night.

### *The Objective*

In response to the teaching and preaching of the church, the work at Valley Farm took on a new dimension. It became sort of an "embodied prayer." No longer was the main effort directed toward the making of a living. Right living was the thing that counted. With this objective, work was lifted above all drudgery and became a joy in itself. Family plans converged in the purpose to make life "richer, finer, and fuller."

In keeping with this spirit Valley Farm became a center of hospitality. First in the list of guests was the preacher and his family. Then there were the school teachers who were counted but little lower, if any, than the preachers themselves. Hospitality, however, did not end with these two groups. There were the itinerant peddlers and the tramps. None of them were ever turned away. The preachers and teachers were entertained as an opportunity for fellowship; the peddlers and the tramps were accepted as a responsibility.

### *Education*

This couple dreamed great dreams for the education of their children. Their three sons found their way through college and university. Because of the church the school came to occupy one point in an equilateral triangle so far as Valley Farm was concerned, the other two points being the church and the home.

To use finally an overworked modern word, the basic reaction of this couple to the teaching of the church was the determination to create a Christian home. A part of that program was the plan to make Valley Farm a comfortable, attractive place in which to live. Step by step the house was remodeled until it had every convenience of even these recent days. As means permitted, the shed that sheltered the stock on the farm was replaced by a magnificent barn, built with something of the same spirit of devotion manifested by those who erected the cathedrals in the long ago. Other improvements came; in time shade trees as well as orchards were planted. The place became one of the more attractive farms along the main highway on which it was located.

### *Enduring Values*

But all this physical improvement was never allowed to be a substitute for emphasis on the things of more enduring value. As I write, I see a photograph of Valley Farm when the building program was rounded out, but I also see an old fashioned sampler which used to hang on the wall of the dining room. It bore the simple inscription, worked with yarn of many colors, "God Bless our Home." This was an earlier version of the later song, "Bless this House, O Lord We Pray." That was the spirit in which Valley Farm was builded and its dream fulfilled.

More might be written to show that the *Angelus* and Valley Farm have a deep-seated relationship. The famous painting reveals one couple in a fleeting moment of devotion at the call of the church. Separated far from time and space, this other couple, also tillers of the soil, joined them in the self-same spirit of grateful dedication. They are a part of that great company who have felt if they did not say: "As a hart longs for flowing streams, so longs my soul for thee, O God."

—Reprinted from
*The Rural Church*

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## Cooperatives in Egypt

• Paul Maris, a technical consultant to the Point Four program in Egypt, is quoted in the *New York Times* to the effect that Point Four's greatest contribution to the success of Egypt's land reform could be aid in setting up and operating cooperative associations authorized by the Egyptian government.

—*Cooperative News Service*

## Does Sweden have the Answer to Soil Conservation?

• You may say it's because of the weather that the farmers of Sweden do not have the problem of soil conservation that our farmers face. The soils in most parts of Sweden are as good or better than they were when farming started in the country 3,000 years before Christ. There are several reasons for this. It is true that the climate is mild. There are no driving rains or strong winds as we have, especially in the Midwest. When it rains in Sweden, which is quite often, it is usually gentle, small-drop rain which goes immediately into the soil.

### *The Reasons*

The concern of the people for the land is probably the chief reason why Sweden has no soil conservation problem. The Swedes want to keep their land fertile so they have put over a third of the arable land in permanent hay, hay and pasture in rotation and some arable land in permanent pasture.

Then they have given to government the right to see that a farmer does a good job of taking care of his land. Each community has a government agent for the job, usually selected from among the good farmers. He first gently warns a farmer who is abusing his land and gives him some information on how to take care of it. The second warning is to help the farmer and work out a plan of good land use; then see that he carries it out. After all other means to influence or induce the farmer to change his practices have failed the government can step in, buy the farm at going market prices, recondition it, and sell it to someone else who will take good care of it. Only in rare cases is it necessary to take such extreme measures.

A third reason for the good land use in Sweden is the extensive use of animals. Dairy cattle are the foundation upon which the Swedish farm has built its chief income. The average is a little over four cows per farm. The larger farms, however, have from six to ten cows. Every farmer, moreover, has one or more horses.

### *Land-Use Ownership*

Most of the farmland in Sweden is owned by the operator. The law requires that anyone buying a farm must plan to live on and operate that farm. One who has one farm, moreover, may not buy another unless the farm he now operates is too small for economical operation. When farms are for sale the government can step in and buy them if it is apparent that the sale will be to some person or firm who wants to get the farm for some reason other than living on it and getting his living from it.

Much of the rented land in Sweden is rented from old people who have no children at home but who continue to live in the old home, renting the land to a neighbor. The system of old age pensions in Sweden, guaranteeing every person or couple $500 a year or more, depending on circumstances, makes it possible for the old couple to stay in the old farm home.

The underlying purpose of the land-use ownership and tenancy policies in Sweden is to put a stable, family-farm owner on the land who will do a good job in producing and taking care of his land. The Swedes believe the family-farm owner-operator is the most effective conserver of soil and the most efficient producer of food. Wouldn't this work for conservation of soil in America, too?

—D. E. Lindstrom
From *Illinois Farm Economics*

## Tuskegee Extension Classes

• Classes for rural pastors are held at Clayton, Alabama weekly. Recently a report was made to the effect that the ministers who attend the Clayton classes distinguish themselves in the delivery of their sermons and in their general bearing.

In addition to the class sessions, the group of pastors visited three annual district meetings. The moderators in each case took time to present this unusual group. Through these visits contact was made with at least fifty pastors. Some of these pastors have already joined the class.

In December, the Clayton class sponsored a convocation which provided participation by the women, youth and laymen of the churches of Clayton and vicinity.

At Roba, Alabama an evening class has been organized for Bible study and methods for more effective presentation of the Sunday school lessons.

—V. A. Edwards

## Church Ministry to Hoppers

• The largest Church of England newspaper, *Church Times,* presented in a recent issue a picture of the Church's ministry to hop-pickers.

In England, "thousands of men, women and children travel to the country for the annual hop-picking, combining work and pleasure in a four-week stay. They live in huts provided by the farmers and the brewers. They come down laden with equipment—not only clothes, but bedding, cooking utensils and curtains."

Here, in improvised chapels—sometimes an "ex-gipsy caravan"—religious services are held under the auspices of the Church of England. A corps of assistants direct the recreational, cultural and health services. The Bishop of Stepney declares that "seeds are being sown among the hops."

## Rural Life Sunday

• Rural Life Sunday, the fifth after Easter, or Rogation Sunday, will be held on May 10th this year.

The Department of Town and Country Church of the National Council of Churches has published an Order of Service for use by a congregation. It has been prepared for the Department by the Rev. C. R. McBride, Central Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Kansas.

Copies may be obtained from your cooperating home mission board or from the Department of Publication and Distribution, National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., 120 East 23rd Street, New York 10, N. Y., at the following rates: Single copies, 5 cents each; 100 copies or more, $2.60 for each 100 copies. Carriage extra on quantity orders.

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Plants of the Bible.* By Harold N. Moldenke and Alma L. Moldenke. Chronica Botanica Company, Waltham, Mass. 1952. $7.50.

For twelve years the authors of this scientific book have been working to assemble a "resume of present-day knowledge of Biblical botany." The religious world may well pause and express its thanks to scientists for their devotion to the task, and to scientific publishers for their willingness to bring out a volume so useful to both scientists and other persons interested in the Bible and in the history of Bible lands.

One notes with much interest a most unusual list of persons who assisted in one way or another. The distinguished minister emeritus of the Community Church of New York, John Haynes Holmes, and John C. Trever of the Department of the English Bible, Division of Christian Education, National Council of Churches, were among those who aided the authors.

"A popular interest in the botany of the Bible dates from very early times. Plants and plant products are referred to in so many hundreds of verses of both the Old and New Testaments, as well as in the books of the Apocrypha, that it is not at all surprising to find early theologians, divines, and scholars exceedingly interested in them." With these lines the book opens. Dr. Moldenke is curator and administrator of the Herbarium, New York Botanical Gardens, and Mrs. Moldenke teaches biology at the Evander Childs High School in New York.

—Benson Y. Landis

*Unconquerable Kagawa.* By Emerson O. Bradshaw. Macalester Park Publishing Company, St. Paul, Minn. 1952. $2.50.

Emerson Bradshaw was Dr. Kagawa's traveling companion on his latest American tour. In this account of it, he aims to give the Japanese evangelist to the reader as he gave himself to the people with whom he talked while in the United States.

Thus, Mr. Bradshaw arranges his material by topics rather than by quoting what Kagawa said at each place. The first chapters reveal what manner of man Kagawa is, his unconquerable faith, his unpretentious and unencumbered life.

Then come "crucial life experiences" as Kagawa himself related them. There are chapters which deal with Kagawa's attack on the main problems of the peasants of his land. There is a discussion of "Christianity versus Communism." There is the distinguished leader's vision of "the new Japan." "Japan is the only nation in the Far East that still looks to the West for leadership and guidance," Dr. Kagawa reminds us.

—B. Y. L.

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### Rochester School for Craftsmen

• The Rochester, N. Y. Institute of Technology added another link to its educational pattern in 1950 when The School of American Craftsmen became a division of the Institute.

Four major crafts are taught at the School: ceramics; metalcrafts; textiles; and woodworking. "Though a student specializes in only one field the fact that he is surrounded by the others gives him an all around knowledge of the crafts which it would be difficult for him to get in any other way," the prospectus states. Training in basic design, marketing, pricing and accounting is included in the curriculum. Articles which are produced are sold through America House, which provides practical experience for the student in a competitive market.

Each field of study normally includes two school years. The first is basic for all students but, during the second year, specialized courses are arranged with the professional aspect of learning a living and the needs of individual students in mind.

Mr. Harold J. Brennan, Director of the School for American Craftsmen, 150 Spring Street, Rochester, N. Y., will be glad to answer inquiries as to entrance requirements, tuition and courses.

### Connecticut Farmers

• The University of Connecticut's Agricultural Experiment Station has published a preliminary report of a study recently made of economic security after retirement of Connecticut farmers. The report is entitled, "Economic Security in Old Age—Connecticut Farm Operators." This study was made in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and was prepared by Walter C. McKain and Elmer D. Baldwin of Storrs Agricultural Experiment Station and Louis J. Ducoff of the U.S.D.A. Bureau of Agricultural Economics.

A summary of the survey states that "less than half of these farmers believe that farming gives its people a better chance to provide for old age than is the case in other occupations.

"About half of them believe that they will have enough income to live fairly comfortably in their old age. More than forty percent were uncertain as to whether they would be able to meet their retirement needs.

"Only fifteen percent of all farm operators expect eventually to retire. The others were uncertain or had no such expectations.

"More than eighty percent of the farmers said that they expect to live on a farm after retirement. Living in a village or city was mentioned by only six percent of the farmers interviewed.

"Over four-fifths of the farm operators said that they would prefer to live with their spouse alone rather than with their children or other relatives.

"Eighty percent of the farmers interviewed expressed general approval of the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance program and three in five thought that farm operators should be included in the program.

"Eighty percent of the farm operators interviewed approve of the recent inclusion of regular hired farm workers under the old-age and survivors insurance provisions of the Social Security Act."